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SUBJECT: U/S BURNS MEETING WITH SPAIN FM MORATINOS
JANUARY 15, 2010

Classified By: DCM Arnold Chacon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: At lunch with Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns and Ambassador Solomont on January 15, Spanish FM Moratinos outlined his recent engagement with the PalestinQ leadership to promote progress in the peace process and reiterated his willingness to help where he could. He also higQhted Syria,s desire for improved relations with the US. On Iran, Moratinos said that the Spanish EU presidency would offer its "full backing" to US efforts on both the engagement and pressure tracks. Moratinos was skeptical that Micheletti would step down in advance of the Lobo inauguration in Honduras. If he remains in place, Spain would send only a low level delegation to the swearing in. Moratinos said Spain remained a supporter of Turkey,s EU accession, but that the lack of consensus within the EU made progress difficult. Finally, Moratinos said it was essential that there be a US-EU summit in Spain. To not have one would be "disastrous" for the Zapatero government. End summary.

2. (C) Moratinos began by saying that his meeting in Brussels with Special Envoy Mitchell went exceptionally well. Following the meeting, Moratinos reported speaking to the Palestinian leadership (Abbas and Erekat) to urge resumption of negotiations. Moratinos reported that Abbas and Erekat said it would be helpful if Netanyahu could even "whisper in their ear" regarding settlements. Moratinos undertook to continue to encourage the Palestinians to return to the bargaining table, regardless. Moratinos mentioned the Syrians' desire to forge a new relationship with the United States, to which U/S Burns acknowledged that while the Syrian track can at times interfere with Palestinian peace efforts, in this case it could prove useful.

3. (C) On Iran, U/S Burns briefed on the USG strategy going forward, noting that we are at the moment when we have to give full meaning to all elements of it - to include sanctions. Moratinos said that "the United States will have our full backing during the EU Presidency" with respect to the Iran strategy. Engaging the Syrians may also be a helpful tool in further isolating Iran, Moratinos added. Moratinos said that as for the dual track approach, Spain was already on this path and mentioned the Spanish Energy company Repsol's restraint on conducting business in Iran as an example.

4. (C) The conversation then turned to Honduras, with Moratinos reporting on the recent visit to Madrid of former President Maduro. As he had previously reQted to Secretary Clinton in January 14 telcon, Moratinos said that if MiQletti does not leave the country before the January 27 inauguration, Spain would not send a high level delegation to the inauguration of the new president. If Micheletti were to leave sooner, perhaps the Prince of Asturias could attend the swearing in of President-elect Lobo, Moratinos added.

15. (C) Q Burns asked Moratinos about his recent trip to Russia, and Moratinos confirmed that Russia appeared to be on board with Iran sanctions. The two discussed Russia's growing anxiety regarding China and the countries' long, shared border, both opining that Russia will have difficulty accepting a diminished role on the global stage.

16. (C) U/S Burns thanked Moratinos for Spain's willingness to accept five Guantanamo detainees. Ambassador Solomont reflected that there was some misunderstanding regarding Spain's commitment in the media but that the MFA had clarified Spain's continued commitment to the first two. Spain's acceptance of three additional detainees will send an important message of leadership to other countries, he added. Moratinos agreed that given other countries' criticism of the USG Guantanamo policy, there should be global willingness to assist.

17. (C) Briefly commenting on Turkey, U/S Burns said that Spain could play a constructive role during their Presidency regarding EU accession for Turkey. Moratinos agreed, but opined that problems with Cypress complicated the issue and that Spain's (positive) view on EU membership for Turkey was very different from some other EU members.

18. (C) The meeting concluded with Moratinos worried about rumors that the US-EU Summit might not happen, adding that it would be "disastrous for the Zapatero government" if it did not take place. Moratinos argued that a lot of thought has gone into a serious agenda that will speak to common areas of interest such as counter-terrorism, security issues, and economic cooperation, and that these issues might be framed in terms of revision to the trans-Atlantic Agenda.

19. (U) U/S Burns cleared this cable.

SOLOMONT